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The Planner and the Preservationist

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Abstract

In many ways the planning and historic preservation movements have had similar but separate patterns of institutional development. Although the planning profession is older and more refined than the preservation effort, their shared concern for the quality of the built environment has made them natural allies in promoting conservation practices in American metropolitan areas. At times, differing objectives have marred their mutual cooperative endeavors; but on the whole, they have developed an important symbiotic relationship that has served to strengthen both professions.

Comments

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The Planner and the Preservationist

An Uneasy Alliance

Eugenie Ladner Birch and Douglass Roby

In many ways the planning and historic preservation movements have had similar but separate patterns of institutional development. Although the planning profession is older and more refined than the preservation effort, their shared concern for the quality of the built environment has made them natural allies in promoting conservation practices in American metropolitan areas. At times, differing objectives have marred their mutual cooperative endeavors; but on the whole, they have developed an important symbiotic relationship that has served to strengthen both professions.

"Historic preservation as a distinct kind of urban planning is relatively recent in origin," asserted Wayne O. Attoe in *Introduction to Planning*, a definitive textbook published in 1979. In fact, he maintained, "Historic preservation . . . remains a troublesome aspect of urban planning." Nonetheless, he concluded, "historic preservation can be integrated into comprehensive urban planning practice."¹

Not all contemporary accounts of planning practice agreed with Attoe's statements. Some did not consider preservation important at all. The latest version of the profession's familiar green handbook (also published in 1979), *The Practice of Local Government Planning*, barely mentioned the field. The third edition of *Urban Land Use Planning*, by F. Stuart Chapin, Jr., and Edward J. Kaiser, appearing in the same year, made no reference to it despite its analysis of other modern concerns.²

The stance of the American Planning Association—which grants professional credentials to planners—reflected that dichotomy. Only in October 1980 did the APA admit a historic preservation division into its ranks, allowing it to join transportation, environmental protection, and urban design as a legitimate planning func-

tion. In 1982, however, the association suspended the group for nonperformance.³

Several factors have produced modern planners' ambivalence to historic preservation. Historically, the planning and preservation movements have pursued distinct goals, served different populations, and experienced dissimilar patterns of organizational growth. In recent years, however, the two groups have moved closer together. Their growing cooperation has hinged on two interrelated items: each movement's evolving definition of its function in American society, and the changing nature of public-sector involvement in urban development.

In the first instance, planners and preservationists have moved closer to each other through the redefinition of their respective missions. In the past fifty years, many planners have slowly narrowed their focus from analysis of regional and citywide trends to concentration on neighborhood efforts. During the same period, the preservationists have broadened their agenda to include the conservation of urban districts and neighborhoods as well as isolated, individual structures. Although neither group has lost sight of its own origins, both have established grounds for mutual agreement and supportive ventures. The implications of their merging interests are best illustrated in their joint participation in selected government activities.

At the municipal level, increased attention to conservation efforts has provided a framework for their cooperation. By 1982, for example, 832 cities had enacted preservation laws incorporating provisions for zoning protection, districting, and transfer of development rights—areas of traditional planning interest.⁴ Furthermore, a growing body of federal and local case

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law—culminating in the landmark *Grand Central decision*, *Penn Central Transportation v. New York City* (438 U.S. 1978)—strengthened the legal basis for this use of the police power, a factor not lost on the planners.

In reality, federal government initiatives have contributed most substantially to joint efforts by planners and preservationists. Direct funding, new administrative practices, and tax reforms have been the main features of national planning-preservation activities. For example, a 1980 study of funding practices under the Urban Development Action Grants administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development revealed that HUD had spent about 43 percent of its funds on rehabilitation, much of which involved preservation. (Rehabilitation dated from 1954, when the Housing Act and succeeding urban legislation authorized such expenditures.) Funding for rehabilitation of historic properties dated from the 1966 Model Cities Act.⁵ Additional impetus came from the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act (1966), which established important intergovernmental bureaucratic links; and insertion of key provisions in the Transportation Act (1966) and the National Environmental Protection Act (1969), both of which required federal administrators to take special care to protect historic sites. Finally, the Tax Reform Act of 1976 and its subsequent amendments made adaptive reuse (the recycling of older buildings formerly considered obsolete) economically viable and provided an alternative to clearance-and-demolition schemes often employed by planners in urban development.

Through these devices, historic preservation slowly became an important item in the urban agenda. By 1980, planners and preservationists united to promote common interests. Their merger was only partial, however, for each shared reservations about the others' actions. Nonetheless, they had forged a fragile, if uneasy, alliance. This paper documents the growth of that alliance, highlighting the steps leading to its achievement and outlining unresolved areas.

The early years: Progressive era to the New Deal

At their inception, the planning and preservation movements had very little in common, despite their shared progressive roots. Although both were responses to late nineteenth-century urbanization and industrialization, they differed in thrust, in organizational style, and in their views of the relationship between the public and private sectors.

While the planners had reformist, rationalist origins, the preservationists had patriotic, romantic roots. Shortly after 1909, the year when the first National Conference on City Planning and the Congestion of Cities convened and the landmark Chicago Plan was issued, planners had a clear vision of their mission.

They were to present prescriptions or master plans for improving city life. To that end they appraised urban systems, especially circulation and recreation facilities, and restructured metropolitan centers to create long-range schemes for civic order. Later they added important implementation devices. Their most successful efforts were the zoning ordinance and the capital budget. In the first three decades of the twentieth century, planners would refine and codify their movement, ultimately setting up professional qualifying criteria; create a solid base of citizen support; and mobilize sufficient political strength to make planning a legitimate municipal concern exercised through the permanent local planning commission and planning department. By 1927, four hundred American towns had incorporated some form of planning in their operations.⁶

Although essentially local in focus, the planning movement would be highly organized on the national level. By 1934, it had three representative organizations, the American Institute of Planners, the American Society of Planning Officials, and the American Planning and Civic Association. Membership in the former two groups was dominated by white, male professionals, while the latter had a larger female representation in its membership, which consisted largely of citizen volunteers.⁷

On the whole, the planning movement—with its amalgam of professionals, including architects, engineers, lawyers, and real estate agents, and its diverse base of citizen support, including politicians, businessmen, and volunteer civic activists—insinuated itself into American municipal life rapidly and efficiently.

In contrast, the preservation movement had a slower, narrower growth pattern. Motivated by desires to "Americanize" immigrants by showing them historical landmarks or to rescue important monuments from destruction in the wave of new construction that characterized the period, individuals, often women, organized local efforts to preserve significant structures. Occasionally those efforts attracted national attention, such as the successful mid-nineteenth-century battle led by the Mount Vernon Ladies Association to prevent George Washington's home from falling into the hands of real estate speculators; but more often, they remained parochial.⁸

Like planners, preservationists came from varied, usually upper-income backgrounds. They came from patriotically based national groups such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, interest associations such as the (Theodore) Roosevelt Memorial Association, local civic and municipal art supporters, and assorted professions, including architectural history, museum and antiquarian societies. Unlike planners, however, the preservationists did not have an immediately definable product. Their approach was to organize simple, reactive responses to rescue threatened individual structures or sites of historic importance. Anyone in-

terested could participate; no credentials were required. They had no specialized methods except to use rather broad criteria for determining the historic (and later the aesthetic) legitimacy of the buildings concerned. They did not articulate a generally applicable set of professional concerns, for in their early years they had no equivalent to the master plan, zoning ordinance, or capital budget. Although they welcomed public-sector involvement to finance the purchase and maintenance of specific sites—particularly after the 1906 passage of the Antiquities Act and its expansion in 1916 through the creation of the National Park Service—they did not have a clear-cut vision for continuous, comprehensive, or systematic procedures to enhance preservation. Furthermore, coming from elite backgrounds, they were inclined to consider their activities as primarily philanthropic, properly pertaining to the private sector.

Lacking the missionary zeal of their planning counterparts, the preservationists were less eager organizers. Although some activists had created a few associations, such as the American Scenic and Historic Society (incorporated in New York in 1895) and the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (organized fifteen years later in Boston), their efforts emphasized communications, not professional development, and remained regional, not national, in focus. The only national professional involvement that occurred in the period took place in the American Institute of Architects' intermittent preservation committees, which unsystematically established acceptable style authentication and restoration techniques for historic buildings.⁹

In those early years, the planners and the preservationists had few formal links. Except for sharing occasional common concerns, such as joint sponsorship of the Federal City project in Washington, they had little to contribute to each other. After 1925 that mutual independence would change. At that time, two projects, the restoration of Williamsburg, Virginia (1924), and the establishment of the Old City District in Charleston, S.C. (1931), began a new era of planner-preservationist cooperation.

The relationship between planning and preservation in Williamsburg was subtle. The town had an elegant seventeenth-century plan based on Le Nôtre's Versailles and Wren's postfire London reconstruction project, and when local minister William Goodwin and financier John D. Rockefeller began to collaborate in 1924, they originally intended to restore individual buildings. As work progressed, however, they slowly shifted their focus to the whole of colonial Williamsburg. Ultimately, they authorized the reconstruction of its entire urban fabric, including streets and open spaces. Soon, twentieth-century problems began to demand their attention: where would the thousands of visitors stay; how would they circulate through the reconstruction; and most important, how would the restored district be protected? Although Rockefeller's 1928 suggestion to hire a city

planner to answer these questions went unheeded, the professionals engaged did create a battery of legal devices to meet the modern needs of the museum-city, including the legal demarcation of the area as a historic district.¹⁰

As Williamsburg attracted nationwide attention, preservationists in other towns modeled their efforts on the Virginia experience. They also were faced with the problem of integrating historic zones into working municipalities, not museum towns. In the larger cities with a more resistant urban structure, this type of planning would be refined.

The case of Charleston, South Carolina, is illustrative and represents a significant step in the evolution of the planning-preservation alliance. In Charleston, three major tools of the planning-preservation effort—surveying, zoning, and financing—were developed. As with most evolutionary efforts, they were not created systematically but were invented to meet current needs.

In 1931, after a lengthy campaign by the privately organized Society for the Preservation of Old Dwellings, founded in 1920 by real estate agent Susan P. Frost, the city government designated eighty acres of downtown land as a special zoning district where exterior alteration and new construction were subject to restrictions. Advised by Pittsburgh planner and zoning expert Morris Knowles, who set the Old City District boundaries, the city established administrative procedures incorporating the city planning and zoning commissions and a newly appointed Board of Architectural Review. In a coordinated effort, the society financed restoration in the area using a revolving fund to purchase and renovate the district's dwellings, which then were sold or rented on the open market. Ten years later, in 1941, planning consultant Frederick Law Olmsted recommended an additional refinement to the program, a citywide architectural survey that was undertaken with Carnegie Foundation funding by the Carolina Art Association. That survey remained the community's basic reference through two enlargements of the district, only to be replaced by an updated version thirty years later.¹¹

Although the Old City District designation represented a new level in cooperation between planners and preservationists, this pioneering effort had definite limitations. In a bid to secure the support of the area's commercial interests, for example, the professionals excluded businesses from the district's restrictions. In addition, in keeping with contemporary practice, they justified their work in terms of elimination of the slums that characterized the area (which, incidentally, was the setting of Dubose Heyward's regional classic *Porgy*, the inspiration for George Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*). They simply did not include today's issues of displacement, relocation, and gentrification in their calculations.¹²

Over the years, the Charleston model would be replicated in only a few cities, notably New Orleans, Lou-

isiana, and Monterey, California, but the district designation and its protective devices would not be employed widely until several decades later. Instead the movements continued on the largely separate courses of development set years earlier. Planners, whose real interests lay in regulating new construction, resource allocation, transportation, and population dispersion, concentrated on the housing, slum clearance, and garden city programs embodied in the New Deal activities of the Public Works Administration, the Federal Housing Administration, the National Resources Board, and the Resettlement Administration. There they proudly created public housing developments, model subdivision standards, state land use plans, and greenbelt towns. Sharing in the federal largess, the preservationists promoted site-specific activities, namely the recording of the nation's representative architecture through the Historic American Buildings Survey and the designation, purchase, and maintenance of landmarks by an expanded National Park Service. That work contributed uniform evaluative criteria to conservation practices. Essentially, both groups neglected the local urban district focus.

Despite the neglect of larger urban preservation issues during the New Deal, the framework for a planning/preservation alliance was in place at the end of the period. At its base was the professional expertise preservationists had gained by adapting techniques from planners and architects. As can be seen from the Williamsburg and Charleston examples, preservationists were forced by the scope of urban projects to enlarge their vision and make their work systematic. They adopted a three-pronged approach to their work, incorporating methods for articulating and administering districts, standards for declaring sites worthy of conservation, and formulas for creative financing.

Planning and preservation in the middle years: Postwar to the sixties

The federally sponsored New Deal initiatives would continue to influence the planning and preservation movements in the two decades after the Second World War. Consequently, they would continue in their separate stances. As both groups matured and regularly re-evaluated their activities, however, they began internal restructuring efforts that would lead to a merging of interests by the end of the period.

With the end of the war, planners were caught up in managing suburbanization and urban renewal. Slum clearance, new construction, highway planning, and the revitalization of central business districts became primary professional concerns. "Conservation" and "preservation" were rarely part of the practitioner's vocabulary. Fueled by \$10 billion in federal funds appropriated by the Housing and Slum Clearance Act of

1949 and subsequent amending legislation, planners adopted the standard "write-down" formula. They designated urban renewal areas and condemned and cleared land to provide sites for entrepreneurs to develop according to municipal comprehensive plans.¹³ They aimed to renew the economic lives of declining central cities.

The early course of urban renewal in New Haven, Connecticut, exemplifies this model. A small city of only about 130,000 inhabitants, endowed with a major university and a beautiful town green dating from the seventeenth century, New Haven had been dissatisfied with its situation for most of the twentieth century. Too close to New York to compete culturally, overshadowed economically and politically by Hartford, losing population and commerce to the wealthier suburbs, and alarmed by the concentration of poor minorities in decaying older neighborhoods, New Haven had all the problems of dozens of old cities of the northeast.¹⁴ The only thing that made New Haven different was the aggressiveness with which it tried to apply diverse planning nostrums to those ills. As early as 1910 it had a park plan by Gilbert and Olmsted; in 1941 the new City Planning Commission hired Maurice Rotival to produce a comprehensive plan stressing highway improvements.

Although nothing much came of either of those plans, the city was clearly predisposed to accept self-improvement schemes. In 1953 the electorate confirmed that predisposition when it made Richard Lee mayor on the basis of his campaign platform to bring urban renewal to the city.¹⁵ Vowing to rid the downtown of its Oak Street slum, to restore central business functions, and to improve access to the core from the suburbs, Lee hired young lawyer Edward Logue to spearhead the activity as the city's first development administrator. "Clear and rebuild" were Lee's orders to Logue, an adept fund-raiser who turned the trickle of federal funding into a torrent. (By 1967 New Haven would receive \$790 per capita in urban renewal funds; New York City had received \$42 per capita.)¹⁶

Under the Lee-Logue administration, renewalists transformed the downtown. They leveled the Oak Street slum and replaced it with a shopping mall and parking garage. They joined the city to the suburbs with a six-lane connector to the Connecticut Turnpike. Hailed in contemporary professional journals and the popular press, New Haven, for a few short years, seemed to provide a successful model for the nation's planners.¹⁷

City after city incorporated its method. By 1962, 588 communities had projects, and Federal Urban Renewal Administrator William Slayton predicted that by 1964, 750 cities would be engaged in more than fifteen hundred projects.¹⁸ In efforts to achieve their ends, the urban renewalists—usually a coalition of planners, local politicians, journalists, and business and civic leaders—justified the wholesale destruction of large sites, re-

ardless of the viability of individual parcels, a rationale that would be upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court decision handed down in 1954 in *Berman v. Parker* (348 U.S. 26, 75 S. Ct. 98, 99). In that case, the plaintiff, an owner of a successful Washington, D.C., department store located in the Southwest Urban Renewal Area argued that his property was not blighted and therefore not eligible for condemnation under the "write-down" process. Using the widest possible interpretation of public purpose, the court rejected his plea. It argued that health and safety were not the only constitutional tests of public purpose and that the attractiveness of a whole area might be construed as serving the general public interest, thus upholding current clearance practices.¹⁹ By that judgment, the court left the way open for renewers to seize and write down land almost anywhere.

Although most communities followed the standard urban renewal pattern as illustrated in New Haven, some exceptions did exist. In Boston, for example, the new government center plan, while focusing on new construction, did incorporate eighteenth- and nineteenth-century buildings into its design. Professional guidance from planners Frederick Adams, John Howard, and Roland Greeley and architects I. M. Pei and Walter Whitehall had led to a national competition for downtown reconstruction. The 250 entrants were required to consider two national shrines, the Old State House and Faneuil Hall-Quincy Market, and several adjacent streets as an "inseparable part of the design ensemble," although they were outside the project boundaries. Within the boundaries, the nineteenth-century Sears Crescent was not given such firm protection. Nonetheless, the winning entry submitted by Kallmann, McKinnell, and Knowles preserved the structure.²⁰ (Even in New Haven, plans would involve conservation, as in the case of the award-winning Wooster Square project, a 235-acre scheme to retain and rehabilitate a nineteenth-century working-class neighborhood.²¹)

In Philadelphia, however, the planners of urban renewal created the most significant example of preservation of the period. Like New Haven, Philadelphia had a tradition of activity in civic improvement dating back to the early twentieth century. Its park system, its city-beautiful-inspired Fairmont (Benjamin Franklin) Parkway, and its militant housing association indicate the latent sympathy that would later be exhibited in a high degree of popular receptivity to city planning and redevelopment in the postwar era. Well aware of the dangers of central city deterioration that characterized so many cities of the period, Philadelphia's civic leaders had been among the earliest in the nation to attempt to reverse the situation. As early as 1943, an enlightened municipal reform effort had vested the city planning commission with a generous budget to undertake a long-range capital budgeting program; a few years later, the Citizens' Council on City Planning articulated the

need for urban revitalization in its well-received Better Philadelphia Exhibition of 1947. Two other groups, the Independence Hall Association and the City Center Residents' Association, added a preservation dimension as they launched their own limited but successful campaigns to encourage conservation. When the Housing and Slum Clearance Act was passed in 1949, the city was well prepared to take advantage of it. Ultimately two agencies, the City Planning Commission, headed by Edmund Bacon, and the Redevelopment Agency, chaired by William F. Rafsky, worked closely to coordinate a short-term development strategy with the longer-range comprehensive plan. Their major thrusts were to conserve the central business district, to embark on a residential renewal program to upgrade the slums and prevent deterioration in good neighborhoods, to rationalize transportation, and to encourage industry.²²

As in New Haven, a major portion of the plan focused on clearance and new construction, particularly for the Penn Center project, which combined office, recreation, commercial, and transportation functions. But an important secondary effort, restoration of Society Hill, the city's colonial, residential core, employed preservation and rehabilitation more widely than had been customary under standard renewal schemes. Endowed with hundreds of eighteenth-century residential structures that were in an advanced state of blight, as well as a picturesque but crowded and inefficient food market, the neighborhood was a perfect site for renewal. Designated as a "key residential belt," the hundred-acre site was a critical component of a citywide housing scheme. After moving the food market to a new distribution center, the city designated the district as an urban renewal area to include construction of three high-rise apartment towers—controversial but financially necessary—selective demolition, and public and private rehabilitation of historic townhouses. Its aim was not to achieve "restored replicas . . . but architectural harmony" in the rebuilding and remodeling of "an attractive residential community with modern convenient living accommodations in towering apartments and small houses."²³

Although a highly visible and successful example of the melding of urban renewal and preservation, the project remained a minor part of the total project costs of the Philadelphia program. By the mid-1960s, it constituted only 12 percent of the city's net project costs and commanded only 13 percent of the federal grants to the city. In contrast, large-scale reconstruction efforts like Market Street East (a shopping mall) and Eastwick (new housing construction) were receiving much higher percentages of the total resources.²⁴ Thus while the Society Hill project received more than its share of national media attention, it did not represent the prevailing model for urban renewal.²⁵ Nonetheless, it did serve as a brilliant testimony to a new approach to preservation and planning.

Of course, as in the other examples of the planning-preservation alliance, Society Hill had its limitations. In the opinion of some planners, the displacement of the area's low-income residents and the homogeneity of the replacement population (primarily white, upper-income groups) was a perversion of urban renewal purposes.²⁶ For their part, the preservationists criticized the visual intrusion of the modern apartment towers and questioned the design of some new townhouses.²⁷ All in all, however, Society Hill, protected by traditional zoning devices, demonstrated that the two groups could cooperate and benefit from the use of renewal powers and funds to restore a neighborhood.

While the planners were engaged in urban renewal activities, the preservationists began to pump energy into their movement. They were driven to organize by a desire to concentrate the fragmentary elements of their own constituency. And after 1949 they would gain more momentum in the face of innumerable threats from urban renewal administrators whose heavy-handed clearance programs tended to be insensitive to preservation concerns. In 1948 a small group of architects, architectural historians, museum curators, landmarks conservators, and others formed the National Trust for Historic Preservation, modeled on similar European associations. Congressionally chartered and funded through private donations, dues, and large doses of foundation aid, the trust had multiple jobs: an acquisition function allowing for the purchase and maintenance of property; a communications role giving technical advice to local groups, publications, and special research; and a professional development capacity encompassing refining criteria for building evaluation and creating educational training programs.²⁸

Except for its acquisition powers, the trust would function in a capacity for preservationists similar to the role the earlier American Institute of Planners and American Society of Planning Officials served for planners. Consequently, the postwar decades featured a significant restructuring of the preservation movement. Under the trust's pragmatic leadership, the very definition of preservation changed dramatically. In only a few years, the organization gained broad acceptance that preservable projects would include more than historic buildings or objects. Its expanded vision, built on the Charleston experience, added the conservation of districts embodying values of local and state as well as national importance. It extended acceptable time periods allowing for Victorian and twentieth-century contributions. And above all, it moved from a relaxed insistence on museum purity preservation toward acceptance of adaptive reuse techniques. For example, in 1951 the trust would endorse the activities of Historic Georgetown that saved that district's older buildings from demolition by renovation and economic exploitation. These views began to broaden the support base of the movement. Measured in trust membership, the

rolls grew from a handful in 1947 to 640 in 1952, to 1,684 in 1956, to 4,000 in 1962. Its most significant growth occurred in the next decade, however, when the trust began to have a larger impact. By the end of the seventies, it had expanded to 42,000 members.²⁹

Armed with a more broadly defined mission, the organization embarked on a course of proselytizing and professional development. Following a pattern used a generation earlier by planners, the trust wooed foundation support to finance those activities. (Where planners relied on money from the Sage and Rockefeller fortunes, the preservationists benefited from the Mellon wealth.) With this financial security, the trust used the same techniques as ASPO had employed years earlier. It sponsored "circuit-riding" experts to give advice to local groups. It offered short courses in preservation administration. It revised and simplified survey instruments in order to encourage data collection. It developed a literature through publication of *Historic Preservation*, a bimonthly journal, and later *Preservation News*, a tabloid newspaper. It organized movies and exhibits, such as the 1958 "Architecture Worth Saving" at New York City's Museum of Modern Art, and it published textbooks like *Historic Preservation Law* by Jacob H. Morrison.

As the movement expanded, model preservation projects proliferated. Encouraged by the trust, several cities used zoning techniques employed in Charleston and the urban renewal model from Philadelphia. Among them were Boston, Savannah, Richmond, Providence, Bethlehem (Pa.), and Pittsburgh.

Savannah stands out as an example of that work. Relatively undamaged by the Civil War and bypassed by the early twentieth-century economic development that transformed other Southern cities, this city of 118,000 possessed a large stock of exemplary but highly deteriorated antebellum architecture arranged in a unique eighteenth-century plan that was characterized by attractive, regularly placed residential squares. In the early 1950s, twin threats of downtown modernization and suburban expansion menaced this resource. While transportation planners proposed to drive a widened street through one of the city's most beautiful squares and actually replaced the Old City Market with a multilevel parking garage, private wreckers demolished eighteenth-century houses to scavenge used bricks to face out-of-town tract dwellings. Rising to meet the challenge, local preservationists, led mainly by women, responded in 1954 with the creation of the Historic Savannah Foundation to raise public support for municipal conservation. Although moderately successful in its early years, it was constantly strapped for funds and became a more substantial influence only after arousing the interest of local bankers led by a young investor, Leopold Adler II. Under his leadership, the group devised a three-pronged preservation strategy: an architectural survey; a campaign for a historic district

designation, protected by zoning; and the creation of a revolving rehabilitation fund. Ultimately the group achieved its aims. It completed the survey of a 2½-square-mile area in 1968. Five years later city legislation protected it with a historic zoning district designation, the largest in the nation. And the group raised \$200,000 for its revolving fund, which, with sophisticated management, it used to establish lines of credit in the local banks, thereby multiplying its value. Besides those efforts, in 1962 the city government incorporated a sixteen-acre residential restoration project, the Troup Trust, into its urban renewal program. In succeeding years, the city sponsored two other urban renewal designations in the district, including one to restore the riverfront.³⁰

While the preservation movement was beginning to grow, the planners were facing a crisis in their history. In the late 1940s, a number of younger practitioners, including Martin Meyerson, F. Stuart Chapin, Jr., and others, had begun to challenge the teachings of their predecessors. They attacked the profession's reliance on the comprehensive plan: they questioned the validity of planning decisions made without citizen participation; and they disputed current urban renewal techniques that were based on clearance and wholesale replanning of existing districts without reference to local culture and historic values. They were joined by other critics who objected to the cost and output of urban renewal programs.

The literature of the period would reflect those concerns. In 1956, Meyerson, at that time a University of Pennsylvania planning professor and vice president of the American Council to Improve Our Neighborhoods (a Ford Foundation-funded group fostering local environment improvement), startled his colleagues with his keynote address at the 1956 annual AIP convention, in which he challenged them to engage in pulse-taking and review activities. Aiming to bring "planning and policy closer together," he urged them to monitor shorter-range, narrowly gauged community concerns. This was a major link toward forging the planning-preservationist alliance because it called on planners to connect planning theory with project planning.³¹ It would be a short conceptual step to neighborhood planning advocated in the following decade.

Others added to the Meyerson prescription and called for a re-evaluation of planning values. Jane Jacobs' *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1962), Herbert Gans' *The Urban Villagers* (1962), "A Choice Theory of Planning" (1962) by Paul Davidoff and Thomas A. Reiner, and Davidoff's later piece "Advocacy and Pluralism in Planning" (1965) all cautioned practitioners to be more aware of the diverse, smaller-scale building blocks of planning and more appreciative of the beauty and functionalism of existing neighborhood organization.³² Finally, Martin Anderson, in the *Federal Bulldozer* (1964), provided planners with evidence of the failure of the clearance strategy. Documenting the high

cost and slow progress of massive demolition, he called for scrapping the whole program.³³

Planning and preservation in the later years: The alliance meshes

Ultimately, the new wave of criticism accelerated changes in national legislation and planning practice, for federal administrators themselves constantly adjusted the priorities of the programs. For example, planning studies were appropriated more generously and allowed for more thorough investigation of neighborhood dynamics and potential rehabilitation strategies. Under this rubric, several studies were undertaken. The *Seaver Townsend Urban Renewal Area* (Boston), *Historic Preservation Plan for a Central Neighborhood Renewal Area* (Savannah), and *The Negro Housing Problem: A Program for Philadelphia* exemplify the technique. Those reports underscored the historic or residential values of the areas in question and led the way to conservation efforts. Charles Abrams, author of the Philadelphia study, reflected this sentiment:

American neighborhoods include the good and the miserable. But housing conditions should not be the sole determinant of what deserves to stay or to be torn down. . . . Demolition of a functioning neighborhood . . . disrupts associations and institutions, destroys what people have added to the neighborhood and the attributes that drew them there in the first place.³⁴

One of the best of these was written in Providence when the Urban Renewal Administration granted \$50,000 for a joint City Planning Commission-Providence Preservation Society study of a 380-acre area on the site of that city's original seventeenth-century settlement. The resulting 200-page report, released after almost three years of investigation, demonstrated a careful blend of historic preservation and city planning procedures. Its authors divided it into three parts: an overview of American preservation; a collection of recommended survey and evaluation techniques; and a comprehensive development plan combining recommendations for urban renewal, historic district demarcation and protection, and long-range planning. Cited by the American Institute of Architects in 1960 "as a major contributor to American architecture, to community planning and to civic design," it was reissued in 1967 by HUD, which by that time was beginning to increase its support of conservation and rehabilitation activities. HUD was so motivated because in the five years since the report's publication, much had been accomplished to demonstrate the success of historic-area renewal undertaken as part of a total urban planning and development effort. A historic district protected by historic zoning covered about a third of the area, and the recommended 120-acre renewal area had been

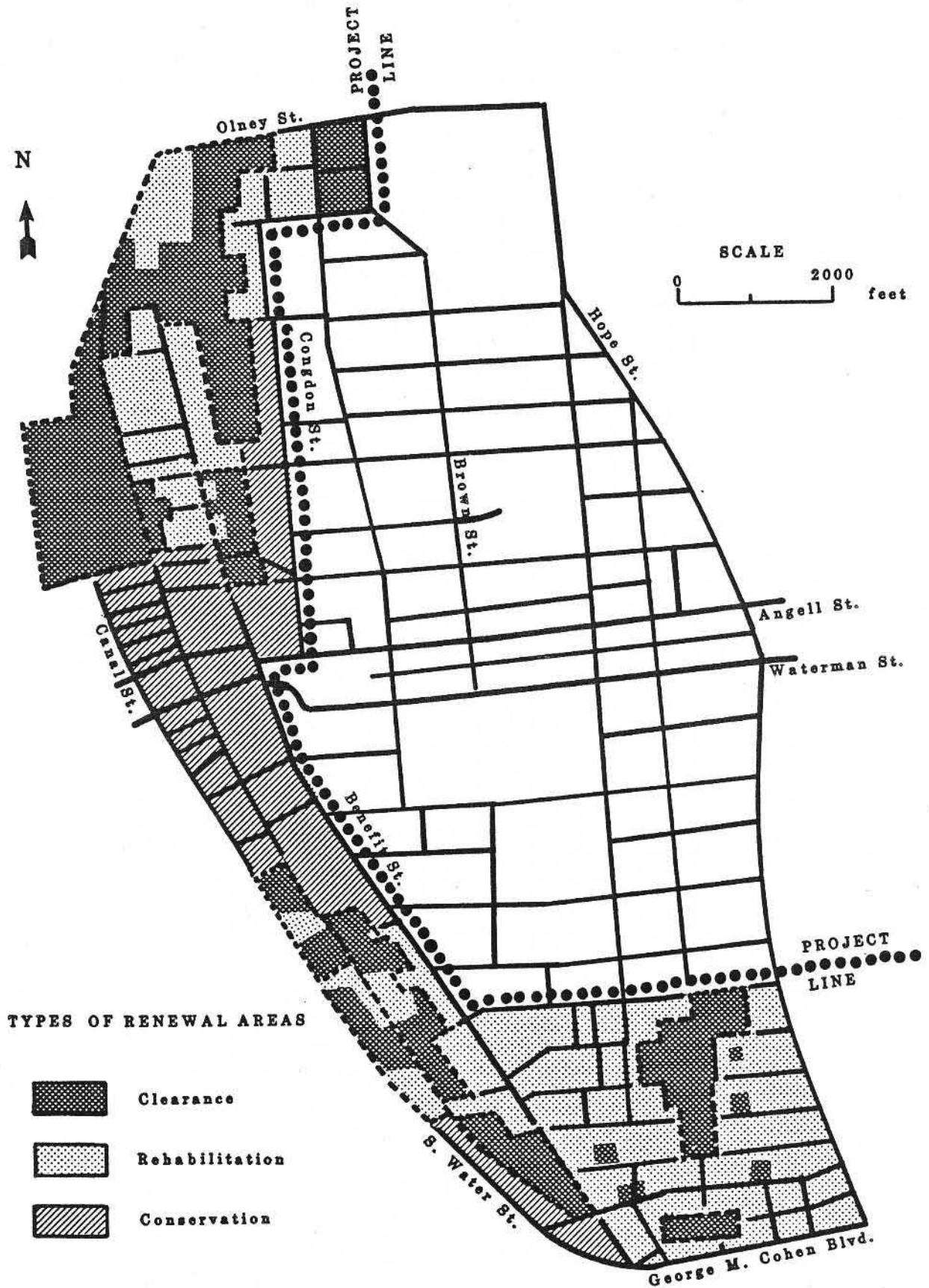


Figure 1. The award-winning College Hill plan in Providence, Rhode Island (1967), featured a major statement on preservation and incorporated extensive conservation areas in the master plan.

incorporated (with its historic protection provisions intact) into the larger East Side Project, encompassing 343 contiguous acres in the city.³⁵ Other cities, particularly in New England, followed suit. Among the notable ones were Newburyport and New Bedford, Massachusetts.³⁶

The planning studies were matched with new conservation-based programs, which, over time, would capture increasing amounts of federal funding. The Community Renewal Program, enacted in 1959 but not operational until the mid-sixties, called for local governments to study and schedule small-scale, non-demolition projects. Implementation for the program came from newly passed code enforcement and below-market rehabilitation loan programs.³⁷ San Francisco, for example, began its highly successful FACE (Federally Assisted Code Enforcement) program after passage of this legislation. As the City Planning Department selected target areas, it frequently included neighborhoods scheduled for massive redevelopment for the combined inspection and loan program. By 1976 it had spent about \$23 million to rehabilitate about ten thousand housing units, a figure that contrasted favorably with the \$12 million dollar price tag of a single slum clearance project that provided far fewer standard dwellings.³⁸

The culmination of the new thrust came in the late 1960s with passage of two revolutionary programs: the Demonstration and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (Model Cities) and the Neighborhood Development Program of 1968. Both called for communities to focus their resources in carefully selected neighborhoods. While the first represented an important innovation in integrating social welfare activities with physical planning, the second provided new operating procedures, including annual funding and incremental planning. The effects of both would finalize planners' acceptance of an approach employing short-range, less-than-citywide solutions emphasizing rehabilitative measures.³⁹ This dramatic revision in planning methodology offered a sharp contrast to procedures reliant on long-term, comprehensive visions and massive neighborhood clearance and redevelopment schemes.

The new approach appealed to planners for a variety of reasons. To some it was philosophically attractive because it included an appreciation of neighborhood values. To others it was economically alluring because it offered a more cost-effective means of doing business. Its overriding value was that it allowed practitioners to deal with urban problems in smaller units and to reap immediate and visible results.

While planners were enmeshed in their internal restructuring, the preservationists continued to be active in expanding their influence. By the mid-1960s they assumed an aggressive lobbying posture, particularly in the federal arena. Amazingly alert to potential opportunities, they forged new alliances and successfully promoted their interests in transportation, environmental, housing, and tax legislation. Their most im-

portant achievement, however, was the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966.

Preceded by numerous supportive studies, such as the Ford Foundation-funded *With Heritage So Rich*, and endorsements from President Lyndon B. Johnson, the law made preservation a public concern and provided a means for integrating preservation activities into the government bureaucracy.⁴⁰

Like the planners of a generation earlier who had gained public approval of the master plan, the preservationists invented their own device, the National Register of Historic Places. This federal list recognized structures and districts of local and state importance and provided minimal protection for them by requiring federal review of any government activity threatening them.

Supplementing the extant national historic landmark system, the contents of the National Register were drawn from an intricate recommendation system. With 50 percent matching funds from the federal government, states and localities were to undertake surveys to establish nominees according to standards developed by the U.S. Department of the Interior. States were responsible for making nominations. (Most created bureaucratic units headed by state preservation officers for that purpose.) The idea caught on quickly. In 1972, only six years after its institution, the register had 3,500 entries, and ten years later it would have fifteen thousand.⁴¹ By 1980 all fifty states had established permanent preservation offices.⁴²

One reason for the success of the program was the dramatic increase in federal funding for these activities. The Department of the Interior planning and survey allocations rose from \$82,000 in 1969 to \$2.2 million three years later—a twenty-five-fold increase.⁴³

The 1966 act also contained another crucial provision, the so-called "Section 106" review power. It gave this mandate:

... [F]ederal agencies shall prior to the approval of the expenditure of any federal funds or prior to the issuance of any license . . . take into account the effect of the undertaking on any district, site, building, structure or object that is included or eligible for inclusion in the National Register.⁴⁴

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, a presidentially appointed board, was vested with a final review power. Although the provision included no way to prevent the execution of such projects, it, like its counterpart, the environmental impact statement mandate of the National Environmental Protection Act, had the power to delay or to open the questions to adjudication after Advisory Council comment.

While the preservationists were involved in those activities, the planners' emphasis on rehabilitation continued to gain momentum, reaching its logical conclusion in the multifaceted neighborhood movement of

the seventies. In the process, federal urban policy would be transformed from reliance on large-scale renewal projects heavily laced with new construction to locally based community stabilization programs premised on conservation and rehabilitation. Occurring in less than ten years, that transformation had several distinct steps. First, the 1968 passage of the Neighborhood Development Program, while designed to promote efficiency by allowing for annual funding of partially planned projects, had another, more important effect: favoring rehabilitation. Second, new development formulas such as the Federal Home Loan Bank Board's experimental residential rehabilitation program, Neighborhood Housing Services (later incorporated into HUD activities as the Neighborhood Preservation Program), provided impetus by designing coordinated local self-conservation efforts with government programs in code enforcement and capital facilities investment and private-sector, market-rate loans. Finally, the 1974 Housing and Community Development Act and its 1977 amendments bolstered the neighborhood approach through several new or expanded devices. Its required Housing Assistance Plan mandated citywide neighborhood quality evaluations and required the targeting of specific neighborhoods for improvement. Its funding of community development grants, Section 8 housing assistance and Section 312 rehabilitation loans aimed to accomplish those ends. The creation of the Urban Development Action Grant, which had neighborhood revitalization as one of its two objectives, in 1977, and the formulation of the Neighborhood Strategy Areas program a year later more definitively linked the housing rehabilitation and rental assistance programs to other concentrated local revitalization.⁴⁵

HUD's emphasis on conservation was in keeping with changing tastes. Disparate events of the mid-seventies—the oil shortage, the Bicentennial celebrations, the environmental movement—had made Americans more appreciative than ever of the richness of their natural and man-made resources. The well-crafted, well-located housing units of yesteryear fell into that category. Furthermore, economic considerations—prices for used houses rose less than prices of new construction—also played an important part as some prospective buyers purchased homes in previously neglected territories, the bypassed older central city neighborhoods. This trend, which by the end of the decade affected more than half the nation's cities, was quickly named "urban gentrification" because of the nature of its participants: young, well-educated, relatively affluent professionals. While HUD supported neighborhood conservation, it also used UDAG funds to encourage downtown redevelopment incorporating historic properties. The highly publicized success of such projects, notably the Faneuil Hall–Quincy Market scheme of developer James Rouse, stimulated planners to employ federal funding and tax relief techniques to encourage private-sector interest in this area of economic development.⁴⁶

In that environment the planners and the preservationists sealed their close, yet uneasy, alliance. Seemingly, the effort, labeled "neighborhood preservation" by the former and "neighborhood conservation" by the latter, united them. It was bolstered by more than two hundred federal programs offering direct financial aid and technical information. It was made legitimate by the creation in 1976 of the National Historic Preservation Fund, which authorized dramatically increased funding supported by Treasury income derived from the lease of mineral rights on public lands. And it was encouraged by influential indirect benefits contained in the Tax Reform Act of 1976, amended in 1978 and 1981, favoring rehabilitation of certified historic properties. As the movement exploded, terms like "adaptive reuse," "area preservation," and "neighborhood revitalization" became common currency to planner and preservationist alike. Article after article in the *Journal of Housing Architectural Record* and other publications testified to the success of their joint endeavors. The Victorian District (Savannah), Old Town (Baltimore), Hoboken, Georgetown, Alexandria, Pioneer Square (Seattle), Long Wharf (Boston), Galveston, Santa Fe, and South Street Seaport became representative and desirable models of urban redevelopment.⁴⁷

In addition, educators of both fields began to seek ways of training their respective students in the joint methods. Planners whose first degree programs dated from the 1930s incorporated preservation materials into their curriculums. At the University of Illinois, for example, the Department of Urban and Regional Planning devoted its continuing professional education program in 1977 to historic preservation themes.⁴⁸ Preservationists, who had a much shorter educational history and far fewer degree programs than their planning counterparts, nonetheless instructed their students in many planning techniques. Arthur P. Ziegler's textbook *Historic Preservation in Inner City Areas* informed them about zoning, easements, and funding techniques, while Columbia University professor James Marston Fitch's manual *American Building* taught students how to distinguish worthy architecture.⁴⁹

Finally, it was not unusual for planners to become deeply involved in preservation work, as did New Jersey practitioner Jack R. Stockvis. Before his 1981 appointment as deputy to HUD's assistant secretary for community planning and development, Stockvis was project manager of the Paterson (New Jersey) Great Falls Historic District, administered from the city's Department of Community Development. He had come to that position from Jersey City, where as executive director of the Jersey City Historic District he had helped initiate the city's back-to-the-city brownstone movement, an effort that received national publicity.⁵⁰

Yet all was not perfect in the alliance. Torn by different values set within their professions, planners and preservationists questioned the results. While both groups agreed that the aesthetic and economic benefits

of their output could be dramatic, they also had major complaints. In some instances the planners decried the continued displacement of indigenous populations inevitably outpriced in many improved neighborhoods; in other cases, preservationists objected that emphasis on economic development destroyed the authenticity of restored sectors. Other areas of disagreement centered on costs, appropriate reuse, degree of preservation, allocation of federal funds, and selection of potential sites and clients.⁵¹ A typical dispute occurred around the Pike's Place Market project in Seattle, Washington. The focus of a decade-long battle, it ultimately was restored, but not before the topic became an issue in a citywide election.⁵²

Nonetheless, by the beginning of the eighties, an alliance had been forged. Each group had an effect on the other. The preservationists had a greatly expanded vision of their functions. They had moved from the single-minded pursuit of limited objectives centered on protection of specific monuments to conservation of whole neighborhoods—residential, commercial, and even industrial. They shaped a systematic approach to their work incorporating the surveying, evaluation, districting, and zoning tools of the planner. They had fought successfully for participation in major federal programs ranging from community development to open space. And finally, they had developed a substantial following, demonstrating their strong popular base of support. Likewise, the planners had drawn benefits from the alliance. They made adaptive reuse, narrower neighborhood projects, and conservation of existing community structures major goals of their work and carefully integrated them into their longer-range mission of creating comprehensive plans to direct urban growth and development. Thus as the 1980s opened the two groups worked together to promote common goals.

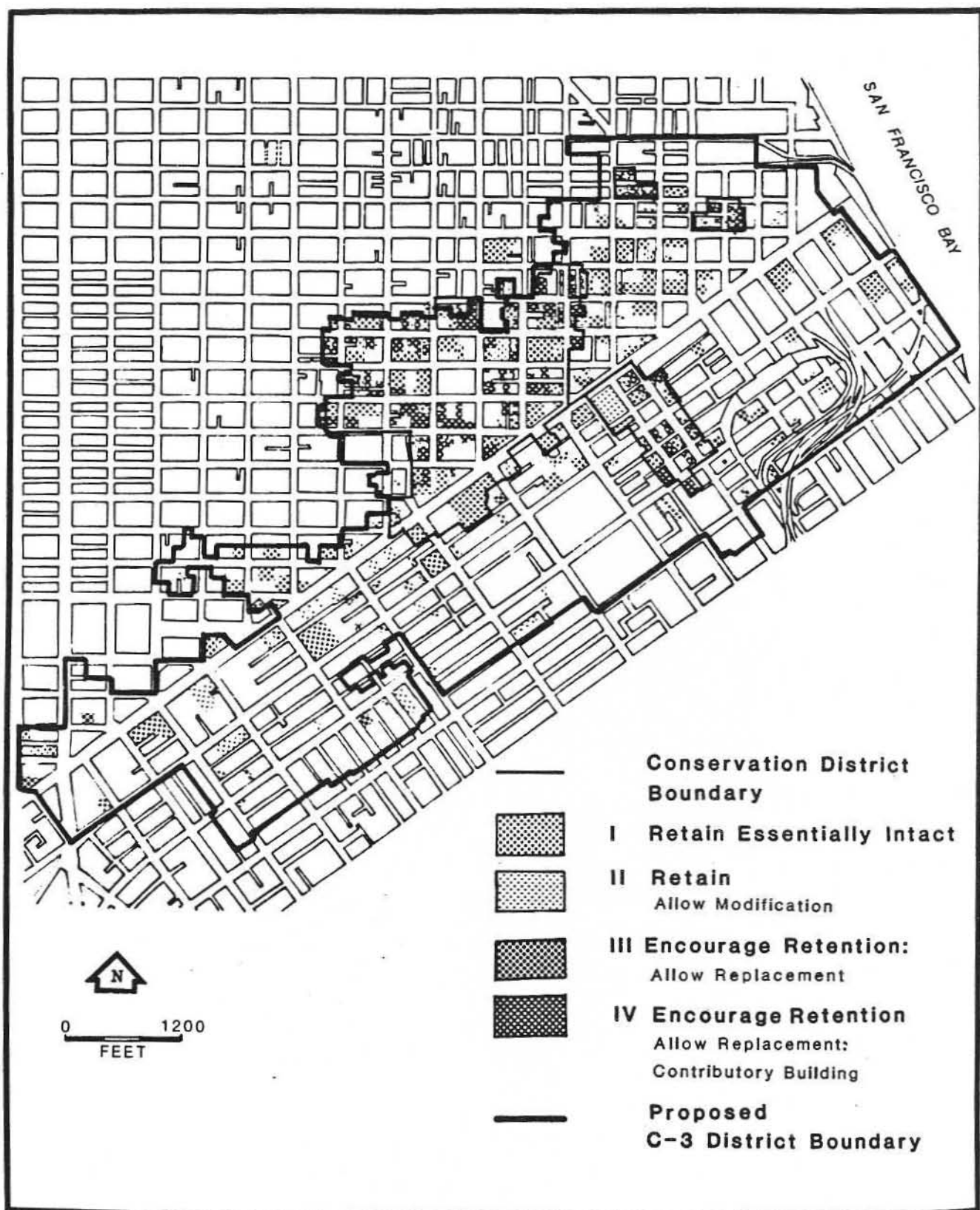
Planning and preservation under the New Federalism: The alliance survives

With the advent of the Reagan administration and its limited vision of urban assistance, the alliance threatened to crumble. When funds became scarce the two groups devoted their time and energy to survival, not alliance-building. At this time, planners faced a debacle as federal aid to cities declined by 12 percent, much of which was subtracted from planning programs.⁵³ Allocations for community block grants and Section 8 housing were slashed. Areawide planning assistance, the "701" program, and Section 312 rehabilitation loans were eliminated. The Urban Development Block Grants, threatened with extinction, were saved only after a furious fight, and even then funds were reduced by one-third.⁵⁴ The preservationists faced more substantial cuts. As early as 1979 President Jimmy

Carter, in a last-ditch effort to balance the budget, had begun to chip away at their \$55 million budget while leaving HUD appropriations intact.⁵⁵ Under the Reagan administration they faced an even more difficult situation. After a presidential request in 1980 for zero funding, they successfully battled for \$26 million for the Historic Preservation Fund. In the three succeeding years, that scenario reappeared; yet the preservationists' strenuous lobbying yielded a successful outcome and their funding stayed at the same level.⁵⁶

As the two groups fought for survival, some of the underlying differences between them became more apparent. The stance of each on a key Reagan urban policy, the enterprise zone, exemplifies the rift. While both basically supported the effort, each also had reservations that, on examination, revealed disregard or deep-seated distrust of the other's goals. The planners believed that the enterprise zone proposals should be amended to enable their coordination with community block grant districts, to eliminate the limit on the number of zones, and to balance the amount of labor and capital-intensive businesses eligible for favorable tax treatment embodied in the legislation. They never addressed preservation issues in their comments.⁵⁷ In the preservationists' judgment, the laws needed substantial revision to prevent the loss of hard-fought conservation gains of the previous decade. While, like the planners, they pleaded for unlimited designation of the zones, their rationale was different. They feared that the small number of proposed area designations would foster such inter-municipal competition that cities would waive their preservation laws in their rush to prove to the federal government that they merited the award. Instead, the preservationists called for strict and specific measures of protection, including a requirement that the zones be surveyed to identify and register properties eligible for the National Register.⁵⁸

Despite the downturn, the legacy of their shared accomplishments left an important mark on the American landscape. Whole cities, districts, neighborhoods, and individual buildings in hundreds of localities were protected and adapted for modern use through the efforts of these professionals. Furthermore, while the practice of planning has been enriched by the contributions of the preservationists, the planners have added their own techniques to conservation efforts.⁵⁹ As suggested by New York Metropolitan APA chapter President George Raymond, planners have the unique evaluative skills to aid in community preservation decisions.⁶⁰ That thesis was borne out in August 1983, when Dean Macris, director of the city planning department of San Francisco, unveiled a daring plan to direct the growth of the city's downtown. Central to the program were provisions for block-by-block protection of almost 500 historically significant buildings in five architectural conservation districts. Thus the alliance, uneasy as it is, has encouraged a new vision of the desirable urban



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Figure 2. Sixteen years after the Providence plan, the Downtown Plan for San Francisco incorporated many acres of conservation district in the central area of the city, an action that merited the attention of the press throughout the country.

scene and is forging a permanent heritage for the nation. Preservationists have played their part particularly in the aesthetic area by identifying and publicizing significant buildings, neighborhoods, and cities. Planners have contributed their skills in providing legal and administrative conservation techniques and integrating the programs into general schemes directing urban development. On the whole, their cooperative efforts have yielded positive results.

Authors' note

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